

Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado

Volume 8

Number 1 *Research Day 2018 - Undergraduate
Research Excellence Award Winners & Finalists*

Article 17

April 2019

Indoctrinating German Youth: Children's Stories and Textbooks as Propaganda in the Third Reich

Sarah Ritter

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ritter, Sarah (2019) "Indoctrinating German Youth: Children's Stories and Textbooks as Propaganda in the Third Reich," *Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado*: Vol. 8 : No. 1 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj/vol8/iss1/17>

This Abstract is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado by an authorized editor of Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. For more information, please contact Jane.Monson@unco.edu.

Humanities

Oral

Title: Indoctrinating German Youth: Children's Stories and Textbooks as Propaganda in the Third Reich

Presenter: Ritter, Sarah

Faculty Sponsor: Clinefelter, Joan

Abstract:

"Indoctrinating German Youth: Children's Stories and Textbooks as Propaganda in the Third Reich" discusses the ways in which Nazis twisted children's education in an effort to ensure that the Third Reich lasted. When Hitler assumed power in 1933, most Germans were not anti-Semitic. The Nazis planned to create a "purified" Aryan race starting with young children. While preteens participated in Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, younger children were not constantly exposed to Third Reich ideology. The party found a way to create more Nazis through education and children's books. My research focuses on textbooks and children's books created during the Third Reich. I argue that these books were forms of propaganda meant to enforce anti-Semitism, reinforce traditional gender roles, and place all trust in Hitler and the Nazi party. All three aspects present in children's education under the Third Reich prove what the Nazis wanted in their idealized Aryan race. Books such as *The Poisonous Mushroom* used short stories and crude images to depict the Jews as evil incarnate in an effort to ingrain fear into children's minds. Textbooks emphasized traditional gender roles and reinforced the cult of personality around Hitler. Stories involved boy protagonists idolizing soldiers and playing war games while the girl characters practiced homemaking skills. The stark contrast for genders in these stories was intentional, for each gender had a specific role in the Third Reich. Nazi textbooks prepared boys for wartime and emphasized a girl's duty to enter motherhood. Nazi elementary readers included fictionalized meetings and accounts of Hitler's life in order to strengthen the Third Reich through the idolization of their leader. The Nazis developed literature for young children as a means to instill their value system and indoctrinate the youngest members of the Third Reich to ensure it would last for generations.